



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
BEAUMONT DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

V.

LAQUESHA ANTWINNE MCCLAIN

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§

CASE NO. 1:12CR31

**FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECOMMENDATION ON GUILTY PLEA
BEFORE THE UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE**

By order of the District Court, this matter was referred to the undersigned United States Magistrate Judge for administration of a guilty plea and allocution under Rules 11 and 32 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. Magistrate judges have the statutory authority to conduct a felony guilty plea proceeding as an “additional duty” pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(3). *United States v. Bolivar-Munoz*, 313 F.3d 253, 255 (5th Cir. 2002), *cert. denied*, 123 S. Ct. 1642 (2003).

On August 29, 2012, this cause came before the undersigned United States Magistrate Judge for entry of a guilty plea by the defendant, Laquesha Antwine McClain, on **Count Two** of the charging **Superseding Indictment** filed in this cause. Count Two of the Superseding Indictment charges that from on or about 2003, the exact date being unknown to the Grand Jury, to on or about April 26, 2012, in the Eastern District of Texas and elsewhere, Marcus Rashawn Williams, a/k/a “Nook”, a/k/a “Nuk”, Joe Nathan Womack, a/k/a “Gotti” and Laquesha Antwine

McClain, a/k/a "Laquesha Williams Slaughter", defendants, did knowingly, willfully, and unlawfully conspire, combine, confederate, and agree with others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, to commit offenses against the United States, that is, to conduct and attempt to conduct financial transactions affecting interstate and foreign commerce, which involved the proceeds of a specified unlawful activity, to wit: conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute five (5) kilograms or more of a Schedule II controlled substance, namely cocaine HCL, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 846, knowing that the property involved represented the proceeds of some form of unlawful activity, with the intent to conceal and disguise the nature, source, or ownership of such proceeds, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(1)(B)(i), said financial transactions being the receiving of or attempting to receive and the delivery or attempted delivery of a bulk money shipments of United States currency received from purchasers of cocaine HCL provided by the Williams and Womack drug trafficking organization for the purpose of delivery to co-conspirators in the Southern District of Texas via transportation of the tainted proceeds through the Eastern District of Texas, all in violation of 18 U.S.C. 1956(h).

Defendant, Laquesha Antwine McClain, entered a plea of guilty to Count Two of the Superseding Indictment into the record at the hearing.

After conducting the proceeding in the form and manner prescribed by Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11 the Court finds:

a. That Defendant, after consultation with counsel of record, has knowingly, freely and voluntarily consented to the administration of the guilty plea in this cause by a United States

Magistrate Judge in the Eastern District of Texas subject to a final approval and imposition of sentence by the District Court.

b. That Defendant and the Government have entered into a plea agreement which was disclosed and addressed in open court, entered into the record, and placed under seal.

c. That Defendant is fully competent and capable of entering an informed plea, that Defendant is aware of the nature of the charges and the consequences of the plea, and that the plea of guilty is a knowing, voluntary and freely made plea. Upon addressing the Defendant personally in open court, the Court determines that Defendant's plea is voluntary and did not result from force, threats or promises. *See FED. R. CRIM. P. 11(b)(2).*

d. That Defendant's knowing, voluntary and freely made plea is supported by an independent factual basis establishing each of the essential elements of the offense and Defendant realizes that her conduct falls within the definition of the crime charged under 18 U.S.C. § 1956(h).

STATEMENT OF REASONS

As factual support for Defendant's guilty plea, the Government presented a factual basis. *See Factual Basis and Stipulation.* In support, the Government and Defendant stipulated that if this case were to proceed to trial the Government would prove beyond a reasonable doubt, through the sworn testimony of witnesses, including expert witnesses, and through admissible exhibits, each and every essential element of the crime charged in Count Two of the Superseding Indictment. The parties also stipulated that the Government would prove that the defendant is one and the same person charged in Count Two of the Superseding Indictment and that the events

described in the Superseding Indictment occurred in the Eastern District of Texas. The Court incorporates the proffer of evidence described in detail in the factual basis in support of the guilty plea.

Defendant, Laquesha Antwine McClain, agreed with and stipulated to the evidence presented in the factual basis. Counsel for Defendant and the Government attested to Defendant's competency and capability to enter an informed plea of guilty. The Defendant agreed with the evidence presented by the Government and personally testified that she was entering her guilty plea knowingly, freely and voluntarily.

RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION

IT IS THEREFORE the recommendation of the undersigned United States Magistrate Judge that the District Court accept the Guilty Plea of Defendant which the undersigned determines to be supported by an independent factual basis establishing each of the essential elements of the offense charged in **Count Two** of the charging **Superseding Indictment** on file in this criminal proceeding. The Court also recommends that the District Court accept the plea agreement.¹ Accordingly, it is further recommended that, Defendant, Laquesha Antwine

¹"(3) Judicial Consideration of a Plea Agreement.

- (A) To the extent the plea agreement is of the type specified in Rule 11(c)(1)(A) or (C), the court may accept the agreement, reject it, or defer a decision until the court has reviewed the presentence report.
- (B) To the extent the plea agreement is of the type specified in Rule 11(c)(1)(B), the court must advise the defendant that the defendant has no right to withdraw the plea if the court does not follow the recommendation or request.
- (4) Accepting a Plea Agreement. If the court accepts the plea agreement, it must inform the defendant that to the extent the plea agreement is of the type specified in Rule 11(c)(1)(A) or (C), the agreed disposition will be included in the judgment.
- (5) Rejecting a Plea Agreement. If the court rejects a plea agreement containing provisions of the type specified in Rule 11(c)(1)(A) or (C), the court must do the following on the record and in open court (or, for good cause, in camera):
 - (A) inform the parties that the court rejects the plea agreement;
 - (B) advise the defendant personally that the court is not required to follow the plea agreement and give the defendant an opportunity to withdraw the plea; and
 - (C) advise the defendant personally that if the plea is not withdrawn, the court may dispose of the case less favorably toward the defendant than the plea agreement contemplated." FED. CRIM. P. 11(c)(3)-(5).

McClain, be finally adjudged as guilty of the charged offense under **Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(h).**

Defendant is ordered to report to the United States Probation Department for the preparation of a presentence report. At the plea hearing, the Court admonished the Defendant that the District Court may reject the plea and that the District Court can decline to sentence Defendant in accordance with the plea agreement, the federal sentencing guidelines and/or the presentence report because the sentencing guidelines are advisory in nature. The District Court may defer its decision to accept or reject the plea agreement until there has been an opportunity to consider the presentence report. *See FED. R. CRIM. P. 11(c)(3).* If the Court rejects the plea agreement, the Court will advise Defendant in open court that it is not bound by the plea agreement and Defendant may have the opportunity to withdraw the guilty plea, dependent upon the type of the plea agreement. *See FED. R. CRIM. P. 11(c)(3)(B).* If the plea agreement is rejected and Defendant still persists in the guilty plea, the disposition of the case may be less favorable to Defendant than that contemplated by the plea agreement. Defendant has the right to allocute before the District Court before imposition of sentence.

OBJECTIONS

Objections must be: (1) specific, (2) in writing, and (3) served and filed within fourteen (14) days after being served with a copy of this report. *See 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1).*

A party's failure to object bars that party from: (1) entitlement to *de novo* review by a district judge of proposed findings and recommendations, *see Rodriguez v. Bowen*, 857 F.2d 275, 276-77 (5th Cir. 1988), and (2) appellate review, except on grounds of plain error of unobjected-to

factual findings and legal conclusions accepted by the district court, *see Douglass v. United Servs. Auto. Ass'n*, 79 F.3d 1415, 1417 (5th Cir. 1996) (en banc). The constitutional safeguards afforded by Congress and the courts require that, when a party takes advantage of his right to object to a magistrate's findings or recommendation, a district judge must exercise its nondelegable authority by considering the actual evidence and not merely by reviewing and blindly adopting the magistrate's report and recommendation. *See Hernandez v. Estelle*, 711 F.2d 619, 620 (5th Cir. 1983); *United States v. Elsoffer*, 644 F.2d 357, 359 (5th Cir. 1981) (per curiam).

SIGNED this the 29th day of August, 2012.



Keith F. Giblin
KEITH F. GIBLIN
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE